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pb 9780060820695

\$15.99 (\$17.99 CAN)

384 pages; 5 5/16 x 8

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Trotsky

Downfall of a Revolutionary

Bertrand M. Patenaude

The dramatic story of Leon Trotsky's final years in exile in Mexico, and the light they shed on one of the most captivating and controversial figures in modern history

"No matter what your political orientation, if you believe—or ever did believe—in the potential betterment of humanity, then you've got something to learn..."

Few political figures of the twentieth century have aroused as much passion, controversy, and curiosity as Leon Trotsky. Trotsky was that rare combination of the man of ideas and the man of action. His role in history—his epic rise and fall, his fiery persona, his violent end in Mexico in August 1940—holds a fascination that transcends the history of the Russian Revolution. Based on extensive firsthand research, this groundbreaking biography examines Trotsky's remarkable life from the perspective of his last exile in Mexico.

Bertrand M. Patenaude masterfully interweaves the story of Trotsky's final years in Mexico with flashbacks to pivotal episodes in his career as a young Marxist, revolutionary hero, Red Army chief, Bolshevik leader, outcast from Stalin's USSR, and ultimately heretic of the Kremlin, targeted for assassination by its secret police. He vividly recounts the contentious Dewey Commission hearings and the passionate debates among liberals and Communists in the United States and Europe over the Moscow Trials and the charges made against Trotsky.

Drawing on Trotsky's private correspondence and diaries, as well as the testimony of his American bodyguards and secretaries, Patenaude sheds new light on Trotsky's tumultuous friendship with painter Diego Rivera; his affair with Rivera's wife, Frida Kahlo; and his...

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Bertrand M. Patenaude is a lecturer at Stanford University, where he is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution Library and Archives. He is the author of *The Big Show in Bololand: The American Relief Expedition to Soviet Russia in the Famine of 1921*, which won the 2003 Marshall Shulman Book Prize. He lives in Menlo Park, California.